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Vol. CCXIII
No. 5575

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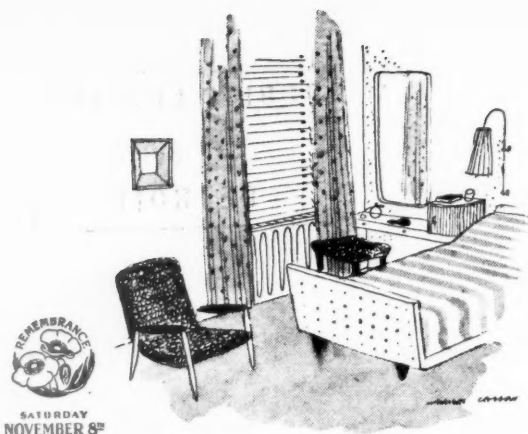
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Punch, October 29 1947

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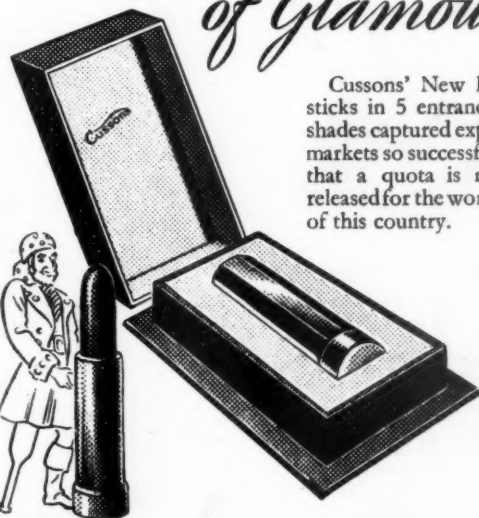
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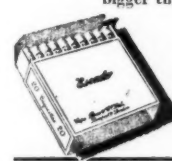
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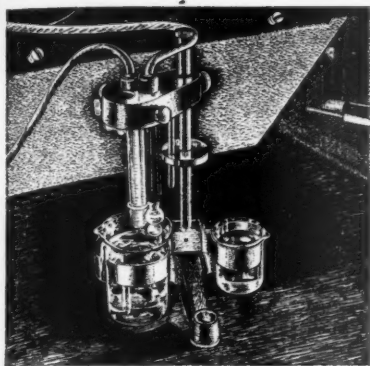
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Punch, Oct. 29 1947





The Acid Test

Every schoolboy remembers that acids turn blue litmus paper red, while alkalis turn red litmus blue. But 'acid' and 'alkali' are not precise words like 'circular' and 'square'.

Of two liquids, one may be much more acid than the other. It is often important to know exactly how acid or alkaline a given liquid is, particularly in canning, brewing, paper-making, sewage-disposal and leather manufacture. Indeed, in all branches of pure and applied chemistry one of the commonest methods of test and control is the estimation of what is known as hydrogen-ion concentration. Litmus still has its uses, but the modern chemist is able to get far more precise information by means of a whole range of dyes, which change colour dramatically at different hydrogen-ion concentrations. When liquids are too intense in colour, however, or have other properties which interfere with the colour changes, a pH-meter is used (pH is the symbol for hydrogen-ion concentration). This apparatus is illustrated above. It measures the electromotive force between the solution under test and a standard glass electrode, and gives results of great accuracy. The pH-meter is another of the tools which enable the research chemist and the British chemical industry to place the resources of Nature at the disposal of the Nation.



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...delightfully mild...they're cool,
they never vary—and what a
difference that cork-tip makes!"

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ROLEX the wrist-watch connoisseurs choose

The Rolex Oyster, first permanently waterproof and dustproof watch in the world, is again on sale in Great Britain. Tested in wartime by men of the Allied Forces on every front, and, in peacetime, by sportsmen in every climate, the Oyster is a handsome blend of elegance and technical perfection. Another coveted arrival, the Tudor Oyster, which carries the Rolex label of guarantee, is the ideal choice for those who want a truly modern watch at a more moderate price.

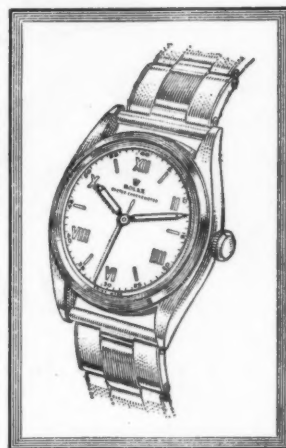
Both the Oyster watches and the limited range of non-waterproofed Rolex and Tudor models are scarce; but connoisseurs of fine watches know they are worth waiting for. Rolex craftsmen created, as well as the Oyster, the first wrist-chronometer; the first waterproof and self-winding watch; and the first calendar wrist-watch—none of these models yet available in England.

The Rolex Oyster in stainless steel, with adjustable, expanding steel bracelet, £26.0.0 (incl. pur. tax).

The Rolex Tudor in stainless steel, with leather strap, £15.15.0 (incl. pur. tax).

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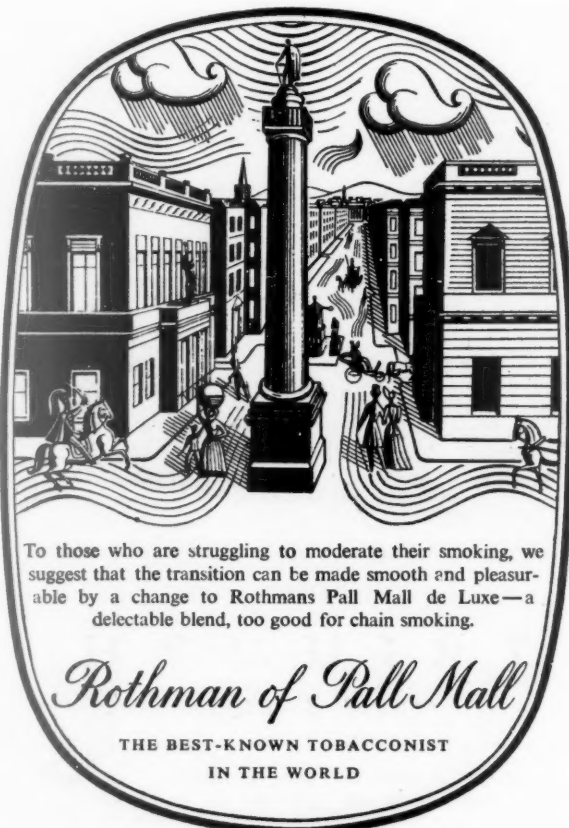
“That

must be
the doctor,
now.”

It sometimes happens, when accident and the risk of infection overtake one of your family, your doctor is delayed. •Not even doctors can be in two places at once.

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Available in limited
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PUNCH

On

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIII No. 5575

October 29 1947

Charivaria

"CRITICS of the landed aristocracy should put themselves in the latter's place," writes a columnist. Who does he think we are then—the Coal Board?

"What could be better than a comfortable old arm-chair, a cosy little fire, and a good book?" enthuses a reader. We don't know; but no doubt some Ministry or other will soon be telling us.



A man charged in London last week with breaking into a bank, stated that he was in perfectly good health when he committed the crime, did not suffer from black-outs or split-personality and was not in need of psycho-analytical treatment. "I just did it for the money," he said.

When powdered milk hardens into rock-like lumps, the Food Ministry advises housewives to break it with a hammer. It is better to do this before it is incorporated in a recipe.

"Mr. Vishinsky's speech, which he delivered with arms swinging and with abundant colloquial invective, was divided into three parts"—*New York Times*.

Like all gall.

A progressive complains that there is often too great a delay between the Royal Assent to a Bill and its implementation. As one example he cites Magna Carta.

It will not be long now before the first consignments of sneek are available in the shops. Already advance samples have appeared in crossword puzzles.

A rubbish dump near a Midlands village is to be abolished and replaced by a tree-fringed ornamental lake—although a section of local opinion holds that it is better to own a rubbish dump than risk losing a beauty spot to the War Office.

Old Joke Revived

"Tobacco workers, who fear that any increase in price will mean unemployment, are to suggest to the Government that imports should be suspended, and socks used for 12 months."

Bradford paper.

"There is no better exercise than swimming for developing a graceful walk," declares a famous international mannequin. How we have misjudged ducks!

"A motor minesweeper and a motor launch minesweeper navigation vessel, engaged in clearing the Thames Estuary of mines reached Westminster Pier and will be open to the public this week."—*Daily Telegraph*.

The other half of the Home Fleet is believed to be still at sea.

The Government aim to double or treble Britain's pig and poultry populations. Can this be why they've cut petrol?



Political Economy

(The essay which follows is based in the main on a paper written many years ago, when the author found himself obliged to answer, for purposes of examination, a question for which he was not fully prepared. But much new matter has been added after careful study and research. The title given to it at that time was "The Curse of Adam Smith.")

POLITICAL Economy was either unknown to the ancient Greeks or else carefully concealed from them. It is not mentioned by Plato or Aristotle, and Xenophon, if it was ever introduced to his notice, rejected it with disdain.

The Romans found it necessary to make a law against it *ne quid detrimenti res publica capiat*, and the Emperor Nerva issued an edict condemning those who practised it to be thrown to the least fastidious of his lions.

It has never been precisely ascertained at what date in the Christian era the heresy began to gain ground, nor how it survived the Dark Ages, but the Mediæval Church set its face strongly against it, and bull after fiery bull proceeded from the Vatican.

In 1169 a Portuguese malingerer who asserted that money was not the sole source of wealth was first of all subjected to the ordeal by water, and subsequently roasted alive. Yet the dark cult went on. In the secret rooms of castles magic circles would be drawn, and invocations uttered to the Powers of Evil. Covens of political economists would ride out on brooms and he-goats, especially on Walpurgis Night, and discuss in horrible detail the theory of supply and demand, aided—as they believed—by the personal superintendence of the Devil, who took the chair.

Many of these persons were apprehended and brought to trial, when they confessed under torture to the foul belief that rent was the effect and not the cause of price, or even in the most obstinate cases that it was a surplus due to the difference in the fertility of land.

In 1594 Magister Gotz led a band of half-naked fanatics into the woods, bearing banners inscribed with the words "It is impossible for a nation to consume more than it is able to produce." He was captured after a short but bitter resistance and deprived of his tongue and his ears, while most of his followers perished at the stake, or recanted on the rack.

Neither governments nor individuals could endure the propagation of so unpalatable a creed, yet it still persisted obscurely and, breaking out into the open from time to time, was the cause of violent civil revolution and the sundering of peaceful homes.

The Borgias regarded political economy with the utmost bitterness, and Leonardo da Vinci despised it. Later it may have formed part of the count against Galileo, though he never subscribed to the view that the value of

manufactured articles is determined mainly by the quantity of labour necessary to the cultivation of the worst land actually cultivated. "One might as well argue," he is said to have murmured, "that the tides are caused by the moon."

It was the gradually extended use of the printing press that dragged the obscene horrors of political economy into the full light of day: and in the northern countries of Europe the new sect became rampant. King James I (of England) coupled its devotees and their broadsheets with the vice of tobacco, as "loathsome to the eye, harmful to the brayne and dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stynking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoake of the pit which is bottomless," and he went on to say (of the law of diminishing returns) that there cannot be a more base and hurtful corruption in a country than the vile use of this poisonous and stenching belief.

Like many authors he was more eloquent with the pen than in the council room. But he was supported by the greatest ecclesiastical authorities.

"What is political economy?" asks one of them, "but a crafty device of Satan to dull the intellect?"

"The fluctuations of interest rates," cries another, "are a hell-dust, and the country's shame." In the meantime the Tsars of Russia punished political economists by flogging them and slitting their lips.

The last public execution for political economy took place in 1742, when a Doctor Wigthorpe, anticipating the Austrian School, was hanged at Tyburn with the words "Value is regarded as the centre of all economic problems and final utility as the key to value" on his lips.

Fashionable ladies blew kisses to him; and his disciples were allowed to remove his body and bury it in unconsecrated ground.

What wonder that in a world where every variety of political economy can be promulgated at will, when even whole newspapers can be devoted to its unhallowed rites and a repetition of its fearful litanies, we are rapidly going from bad to worse. Votaries of the diabolic mystery not only write tracts and pamphlets but may be heard every night on the air.

Shall we live to see a book like Menger's *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaftslehre* substituted for the wholesome stories of romance and adventure that we loved in youth?

(A milder view of Political Economy will be found on page 424.)

EVOE.

Katie's Flying Sister

MY friend Katie is an American citizen, but she lives in England because she is married to an Englishman. I don't understand international marriage law, but that's how Katie says it is. She also says British transportation compares unfavourably with American and gives as an example what happened to her sister.

This sister, apparently, came over here to England on a visit to Katie.

She then flew to Paris and afterwards sailed back home from Cherbourg. Katie went to the British airport to see her sister fly away.

"Do you know? Can you beat it?" said Katie. "When we got there they said there was no place for her on the plane."

"Did she have a reservation?" I asked.

"Sure, she had. There was the ticket, paid for in New York, with the

seat all numbered and everything. Still, they said she couldn't go. The plane was full up."

"What did you do?"

"Do! Why, I said I'd charter a plane and sue them for the cost of it. That shook them. She went. But they had a back-shot at us. They said her luggage was overweight."

"Was it?"

"Sure it was. One little suit-case too much; that's all. So she told me to

1947

Punch, October 29 1947

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ACROSS THE MOON



"Well, you know what the Government's told us—simplify design . . . speed up delivery . . . one basic model."

have it put on the *Mauretania*. She locked it and took the key with her to Paris."

This little passage with the air line was nothing, said Katie, to the business of the suit-case.

"We waited," said Katie, "until the time came round to send it down to Southampton. I said to my husband: 'Bobbie, it's no good going to our little one-horse station. They won't know how to manage it. Better take it to the town up the line.'"

"So that's what we did. Bobbie took it in to the parcels clerk while I waited outside in the car. He was gone a helluva time. When he came out he said it was no good, they wouldn't do it."

"Why not?"

"It needed an export licence and lord knows what. It was a job for a shipping company, they said."

Katie then outlined the moves she made to engage the sympathetic co-operation of a shipping company. She called by telephone all the names in the classified directory. Only one would have anything to do with Katie's sister's suit-case. They consented to handle the traffic. These negotiations broke down, however, over the question of time. "Six weeks," she said they said.

"Yes," said Katie, "they explained about export licences and all that. We had to give a detailed list of what was inside. We didn't know. The case was locked. The *Mauretania* was sailing in three days."

"What did you do?"

"Well, I said to Bobbie: 'There's just one chance. You leave it to me.' So I walked into our little one-horse depot, as innocent as you please, and just checked it in for the trip to

Southampton, like any other parcel. The porter took it without a murmur. When I had the check I asked for insurance.

"After some fumbling he found his book of words and asked how much cover I wanted. I told him two hundred pounds. He seemed a bit surprised, but he gave me the insurance check all right."

Katie then indicated that she thought the case was as good as lost. She didn't care. She'd done her best. She posted the checks to her sister in New York and thought, "Well, anyhow, she'll get her two hundred pounds maybe some day, if she's lucky."

"And, do you know," said Katie, "I had a letter from my sister saying 'There it was, sitting smiling at me on my bunk, in my cabin at Cherbourg.' Can you beat it?"

Safety in Numbers

NEXT time you feel an attack of what Harley Street knows as crisis-neurosis coming on (the symptoms are a longing for rump steak and a general feeling of inability to close the import-export gap), may I recommend a glance at *The Growth of Physical Science*,* by the late Sir James Jeans?

In 2000 B.C.—a good year, this; Sargon the Great had been dead for seven hundred years, and it would be another nine hundred or thereabouts before all that trouble broke out over Helen of Troy—the Babylonians were using a sexagesimal numerical system. In case this is not clear, I should explain that instead of counting up to ten and then starting another column, they counted up to sixty before carrying over. So when they wrote down 123, they did not mean a hundred and twenty-three; they meant whatever $1 \times (60)^2 + 2 \times (60) + 3$ comes to. Only they did not write 123, as it happens, not having the benefit of Arabic numerals. They wrote ' ' ' '. In addition to these acute accents, they had a symbol (for 10, so I suppose 43 would have been written ' ' ' ' ' '. It will be clear, I think, that you had to watch your spacing in those days. If I had left a gap between the first three bracket-things, I should have written down, not 43 but $10 \times (60)^2 + 10 \times (60) + 10 \times (60) + 13$, which is a much larger number.

If you will now write down in Babylonian figures the value of our imports and exports for the first half of this year, and subtract, you will find that the situation is not nearly as bad as you thought.

The above is not the only information of value to be extracted from Sir James Jeans' book. Skipping Hipparchus and Eudoxus and Ptolemy and Copernicus and some others, we come to the nutation of the earth. Every school-boy knows that the earth's axis does not point uniformly in one direction in space, but moves round in a circle which it completes in 26,000 years. But I confess it is news to me that the circle is not a true but a crinkly one, the sort of thing you get when the screw that holds your compass-pencil in place works loose but hardly what one expects of an experienced planet. In other words, the earth not only wobbles but wiggles. I read further that in addition to its well-known orbit round the sun the earth is accompanying the sun (together with all the other pieces of our stellar system) on a journey round some centre unknown which will bring it back where it started from in about 250 million years. This means that besides rotating and nutating and wiggling and orbiting we are pushing along through space at a smart one hundred and seventy miles a second. I find that this pretty well reconciles me to the loss of the basic. The scenery may be monotonous, but it is nonsense to talk as if our travelling days were over.

Sir James Jeans also mentions the nebulae, which consist by and large of about 150 million stars each, and notes the probability that there are about that same number of nebulae in all. A simple calculation gives the total number of stars in the universe and prompts the reflection that if they are all there for our benefit we ought to feel suitably flattered. But we don't. We couldn't care less. Such is human frailty that the discovery of another hundred million stars, each weighing more than an average Babylonian could write down in a year, is more than counterbalanced by the loss of an ounce of butter. This is very disheartening for astronomers, besides making me lose the thread of my argument.

Turning from the infinitely great to the fairly minute,

I should like now to direct your attention to Water-boatmen. These small creatures rank second only to nebulae as a means of taking your mind off your troubles, and I advise that as a start you should read about them in a book called *Insect Natural History*,† by A. D. Imms. The point about Water-boatmen is that in the nymph stage they tend to resemble the colour of their surroundings, and natural historians have long been keen to know whether this dodge really assists them to escape detection by their enemies or whether Water-boatmen as a class are simply wasting their time. Mr. E. J. Popham determined to find out. "He was mainly interested," my book says, "in finding out the biological significance of colour-variations in certain of the Lesser Water-boatmen belonging to the genus *Sigara*." Of how many men can as much be truthfully recorded?

Mr. Popham went to work among some small ponds in Lancashire and "having fixed upon one pond he made daily sample collections of Water-boatmen for seven successive days." He noted the proportions of insects which had, and those which had not, taken the trouble to harmonize their colouring with their surroundings. Next, and rather brutally as lovers of water-boatmen may think, he put fifty minnows into the pond and thereafter continued his daily inspections. When he finally came to compare the proportions of adapted and non-adapted boatmen before and after the introduction of the minnows, the result was remarkable. The proportion of adapted boatmen had gone up or, in other words, *the minnows had eaten the ones that were easier to see*. This story of what may perhaps, without irreverence, be called the Parable of the Wise Water-boatmen, concludes with an encouragement to the reader to assist in the collection of information of this kind himself. "Such information," says Mr. Imms, "is often to be obtained by observation and experiment that can be carried out by persons who have not undergone an elaborate technical training." It is to be hoped that this appeal will not fall on deaf ears. The more Water-boatmen we can collect, the more exact will our knowledge of their colour-variations become, and the less time (as I started out to say) shall we have to worry about surplus wealth chasing commodities in short supply.

It only remains to add that an acre of meadow-land has been found to support nearly 230,000,000 specimens of *Collembola*, an insect of sorts. The count was carried out from the surface down to a depth of 9 inches in the soil. How many more there would be if you went down one foot I should not care to say. But when all the stars have cooled down sufficiently to support insect-life, what would be the total *Collembola* population, assuming that the average surface area of a star is only a hundred thousand times greater than that of the sun? If you take the diameter of the sun to be approximately "'' '<<' <<' << miles and give your answer in Babylonian figures, you will find that the result makes an interesting bathroom wallpaper.

H. F. E.

† The New Naturalist series, Collins, 16/-.

We Saw It a Mile Off.

THE old men grow too proud (disgusting sight)
Of age-old prophecies by luck come right.
It's only short-term prophecy courts ruin:
The rest have got for ever to come true in.

* Cambridge University Press, 12/6.

FLAME is the *Spur* (Director: ROY BOULTING) seems to me to be a perfect example of the kind of picture that ought by all the rules to be very good, but isn't; all the right ingredients are there, but somehow they don't "jell." It is possible to pick out isolated passages of which the detailed description would make them sound like bits of first-rate filmcraft;



J.H.D.

[*Fame is the Spur*

SWORD-PLAY

Lord Radshaw . . . MICHAEL REDGRAVE

I am thinking particularly of part of the riot scene here, ending with the sound of a horse's whinny in the stillness. Something in fact has spoiled it; what?

One thing is the artificiality that hangs over so much of the piece, which I am inclined to put down to nothing more subtle than the concentrated lighting and manufactured sets. To see this picture just after hearing Edgar Anstey's talk in the Third Programme on "The New Realism in Feature Films" was to realize the force of his contention that our fiction films suffer from their neglect of daylight reality. This is of course film-making practice, and we are so used to glossiness and bright lights that some audiences would find the absence of them fatal to enjoyment; but for this sort of story particularly (HOWARD SPRING's novel about an ambitious Labour politician's road from burning radical sincerity to well-padded decline)

At the Pictures

Fame is the Spur—*Partie de Campagne*—*The White Unicorn*—*The Macomber Affair*

a more "documentary approach" would mean, I think, a great improvement. The best thing in *Fame is the Spur* is the playing: MICHAEL REDGRAVE as the principal character is much more than a passive subject for the make-up department's special brand of galloping senility, and ROSAMUND JOHN, as his loyal and understanding wife, brilliantly handles some scenes of genuine feeling. But when I was there the simple-hearted audience reserved its most uproarious appreciation for the sight of BERNARD MILES spitting on an apple.

Indirectly, this kind of easily-amused audience is probably responsible for almost the only thing wrong with *Partie de Campagne* (Director: JEAN RENOIR). This, made before the war, was left unfinished, and hence for a feature film it is very short; but the main impression it leaves is neither of brevity nor incompleteness. It is the small, contained episode of an inconclusive love-affair at "a country excursion," from a story by de Maupassant, rounded off (as so few short stories are these days) by a scene "some years later"; and there is practically nothing wrong with it except a tendency to caricature one or two minor characters.

It diminishes the truth of the piece and throws it out of key when, for instance, the girl's betrothed is shown as a sort of Stan Laurel, a complete figure of fun, played for laughs. But otherwise the thing is beautifully done by all concerned, full of character, and pictorially admirable from the opening shot which surprises with the screen diagonally slashed by the line of a fishing-rod.

The White Unicorn (Director: BERNARD KNOWLES) is a narrative told in what one might, with an apprehensive eye on the grammarians, call antiphonal flashbacks. The framework is the alternate description, by two women,

of their past lives; one woman is the warden of a girls' remand home (MARGARET LOCKWOOD, of all people), the other (JOAN GREENWOOD) her most troublesome charge, whose reactions to kind and understanding treatment are all too pat and suitable ("No one ever talked to me like that before . . ."). The alternating life-stories are clearly meant to be deeply affecting as well as to show each half of the world that the other half can be just as miserable, but—partly because the clichés pop up so continually—I found myself quite unmoved, and watched it all with the utmost detachment.

The Macomber Affair (Director: ZOLTAN KORDA) is the Ernest Hemingway short story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," as it appears after undergoing the processes of inflation and rearrangement for the films, and it seems to have stood up to them astonishingly well. *The Killers*, similarly described in the advertisements as "Ernest Hemingway's," consisted largely of incidents and episodes for which he was not responsible at all; this does at least confine itself to little more than the period of time, and the characters, of his original story, and only the addition of a dubious ending and a shifting of emphasis offer grounds for serious objection. JOAN BENNETT, GREGORY PECK and ROBERT PRESTON are the Hemingway people, and there is much fascinating detail of modern systematic big-game hunting in Africa.

R. M.



J.H.DOWD

[*The White Unicorn*

WARDEN'S TURN IN FLASHBACK EXCHANGE

Lottie JOAN GREENWOOD
Warden MARGARET LOCKWOOD

Old Clothes

"MRS. SCHNIFFEL," said Edith the other morning at breakfast, "wants some old clothes."

"I don't see why," I said, giving up as a bad job my attempt to digest a cheery speech by Sir Stafford Cripps. "Surely the ones she generally wears are old enough?"

Mrs. Schniffel is a char. She started being a char about sixty years ago, and fortunately for the privileged few of us who are blessed with her services she is too old now to change her habits, and when she cleans a room it actually looks cleaner than it did before. By a great stroke of luck we inherited her services on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from a lady who moved to a distant part of the country. Her fees are moderate and she introduces an almost feudal flavour by calling me "sir" and Edith "ma'am." Altogether, apart from being rather heavy on the tea-ration, she is a jewel.

"She doesn't want the clothes for herself," explained Edith. "She wants men's clothes, for her grandson. A suit and a shirt and a hat. I pointed out that in these days clothes had to be worn until they dropped to pieces, owing to the coupons, but she just said that she did not hold with coupons, nor Lloyd George stamps neither. And next day she brought up the subject again and I promised to do my best."

My wardrobe is so reduced that for anybody less important than Mrs. Schniffel I should have refused to denude it any more, but Edith said we must grapple Mrs. Schniffel to our souls with hooks of steel, and that probably her grandson was in urgent need of the clothes.

"Possibly he has just come out of prison or something," said Edith, "and I don't think they give you as many coupons when you come out of prison as when you come out of the Army."

In the end I sorted out a purplish sports jacket, a green pork-pie hat, and a pair of grey flannel trousers. This combination of garments is what I almost invariably wear, combining as it does a suggestion of daring with a sort of literary tastefulness. I adopted the uniform when I first became a writer, and since then I have stuck to it, hoping eventually to become a well-known figure in Fleet Street.

Mrs. Schniffel thanked me warmly for the offering, but after she had gone home for the day a thought struck me.

"It will be rather awkward," I said,

Isn't that Mrs. Smith and her daughter?



No, it isn't—



it's Miss Smith and her mother.

"if her grandson lives in this locality. Munton-on-Sea is a small place, and when people see a man walking about in a purplish sports jacket, a green pork-pie hat and a pair of grey flannel trousers they will think it is me."

For the next few days I looked out rather anxiously for my sartorial double. I had got it into my head that Mrs. Schniffel's grandson was rather a raffish sort of character, the sort of man to be thrown out of public-bars instead of saloon-bars, and I have a reputation to keep up.

In the end it was Edith who saw him, and she came home laughing hysterically.

"Your double is at the corner,

by the grocer's," she said, "being wheeled home in a barrow."

This was worse than I had anticipated. A mild reputation for devilry does no harm to a literary career, but 11 A.M. is far too early for even an author to be wheeled home in a barrow. I rushed up the street to give young Schniffel a piece of my mind, but the boy himself was innocently and soberly wheeling the barrow in which lay my double. Purplish jacket, grey trousers, pork-pie hat. I even fancied that the face looked vaguely like mine, and a large label "SPRV" decorated the manly chest.

"Penny for the guy, guv'nor?" said young Schniffel.



"Heavy manual worker there wants a double helping of soufflé."

The Spiv Desponds.

THIS problem of high living is a riddle
For one to work allergic—labour-loath;
Daily to do, successfully to diddle,
Needs constant skill or endless luck, or both.
I think it takes a more than one-stringed fiddle
To make life pleasant for a ten-toed sloth.

The older gags are largely obsolescent;
It's harder now to screeve or pitch a snide,
Or cheapjack round in some suburban crescent,
For buyers nowadays are far too wide;
The chances of a paying slang have lessened,
And Moskeneering, as an art, has died.

"Try overseas," chirps Charlie, good soldado,
"You have ability, you have the tools."
To me this looks like cowardly bravado.
Why should I hunt with emigrating fools
In some transoceanic El Dorado?
Is there not golden water in our pools?

It's just a question of St. Andrew's crosses
Correctly placed, and luck will look to that;
But, for the moment, mine is out—with hosses.
If I backed elephants upon the flat
They would be beaten by a short proboscis.
No! Humans are the best game—for a rat.

J. B. N.

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

THIS extensive and perplexing subject—by the way, I am talking about Fire, remember that, Fire—is a real stinker for the essayist. The obvious first step is to light a fire in the grate and look at it closely; but before you know where you are you have been lulled to sleep by the gentle play of flamelet and the spizzling of gas and smoke. It is almost impossible to tear yourself away from the fieldwork and get back to making your report in cold grammar and punctuation. What attracts me about the domesticated fire is that it is as much a friend to man as the dog and has the additional advantage of lacking any tendency to burn postmen. It is much criticized nowadays on the grounds that it sends a percentage of its heat I can never remember up the chimney, and fashion is backing the idea of having one fire for a number of homes, which means they must be built all on top of one another with the fire tucked away in the basement, where it is a friend to nobody but the furnaceman. I regard television as a poor substitute for glowing coals and singing kettles on hobs and all the fun you can have with a poker. Of course if you measure just the heat produced in an open grate you can easily prove that you are not getting your money's worth; but what about all the other jobs coal does? Someone ought to think up a co-efficient of cosiness and then we lovers of refined sensations would have some statistics on our side and get taken notice of.

Apart from its pleasing appearance, an open fire provides endless fun if you throw things on it and see what happens to them. Often to amuse visitors we burn bits of an old woollen dressing-gown of my wife's, or, if they are simple folk and easy to astound, salt will do. When we have a party the invitation tells each guest to bring something different to commit to the flames, and though this usually leads us to decide never to ask one or two of the guests again, on the whole entrancing effects are obtained. The bonfire, now degraded into a weapon of aggression for gardeners, used to be even better for this purpose, as you could burn much larger things on it, like effigies of absent friends, and dance round it hand in hand, which you can't do round household fires now they have been moved from the centre of the room to a wall.

Fire is very useful to me in science, as often, when one seems to have come to a dead end in an experiment, boiling the chemicals concerned will start interesting and instructive things happening once more. I also apply it to practical uses, such as keeping a hot-water-bottle something worth waking up to in the morning. I did this by combining the hot-water-bottle with a chafing dish which kept it boiling happily all night. Unfortunately, the council got to hear of it and made difficulties, such as the bed's having to have a chimney, so we gave the apparatus to a jumble sale on behalf of some Welsh who got downtrodden in Douglas, Isle of Man. Many inventions connected with fire seem to have got stuck where they began. For example, stoves you could wheel about the roads were an excellent idea, but why have they never got beyond cooking chestnuts? Of course nobody would want to stop in the middle of the street to work their way through a joint and two veg. (or, if it were a Scotch street, a haggis and twa veg.), but many a *flâneur* strolling through the byways of a great city might well be grateful for a casual omelette or devilled kidney: yet it is chestnuts or nothing for him.

On the whole, fire gets a good press, and even those who are far from being pyrophiles do not go out of their way to attack it. There are societies and journals and subscriptions against almost everything, yet as far as I know there is no movement to get fire put down, no secretary happily



"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Wetherby—it's only filled with ink."

administering a Victorian legacy, no draft convention being hawked round the legislatures of the world. Of course what with spontaneous combustion and volcanoes and the sun's shining on broken bottles, it would be a big job for any crusader to tackle; but people usually become enthusiastic first and find their cause afterwards when they have ceased to be able to weigh difficulties.

Manners and customs which are not about corn are usually about fire, except in very broad-minded books. In Rome they had a sacred fire with some very well brought-up girls to look after it, and absolutely nothing was too good for this fire, they were that grateful to it. Later we find that wayfarers were often lured into bogs by a fire which is called will-o'-the-wisp by romantics, marsh-gas by rationalists, methane by realists, and CH₄ by the inarticulate. Being so much involved with myth and also looking attractive and chic, fire is a great standby to the poet. Here is an epic of mine called "Prometheus the Firebug," which has the distinction of being not only Unfinished but also Uncommenced and is altogether a mere torso, if that:

"... not otherwise than thus."

So spake the Ancient and then silent paused,
As when an Alpine torrent is dried up
And lacking water ceases to descend.
Upon the which the Traveller, amazed,
Further him questioned and in turn stayed dumb,
Him harking...

Ethicists have often referred to the cleansing power of flames, run close only by Tragedy, some think; and of course it is true that if anything is destroyed it can't do much harm. Fire is also on the side of the angels and not just Bohemian and jolly when killing germs. If you prick a blister you should of course boil the needle, but most people hold it in a flame, which coats it with black. This you then wash off and, presumably, the germs with it. Some believe that fire separates pure gold from dross, which in earlier economies may have been a valuable thing to do, but nowadays the gold is not much use, the fashion in currency having changed, and the dross is probably the source of all kinds of useful substitutes and should be sided with. In conclusion, may I refer to the Phoenix? Thank you.

An Indian Painter

AN attractive exhibition of portraits and studies of Indian life by a young Bombay painter, V. R. Rao, was opened with pomp and circumstance at India House, Aldwych, last week, and closes at the end of the month.

Rao was a student at the Royal Academy Schools some twenty years ago, and has since been working in his native city, painting portraits of most of the Indian leaders and occasionally noting with an appreciative eye some passing State procession or the shrivelled features of a beggar. The thirty-five oils he has brought to London show that he has observed the Oriental scene through Western eyes, and none of the peculiar qualities of the Indian Schools—the jewel-like radiance of the Mogul miniatures, for example—can be detected in his art. He prefers light tones and applies the paint thinly with a fluent brush, so that several of his pictures have something of the quality of gouache.

His portraits are occasionally marred by faulty anatomy, and his hands (about the most testing, and often the least considered problem of portraiture) are at present poorly modelled. But most of his heads are beautifully observed and vigorously painted; and the smaller study of "Pandit Nehru," and the portraits of "Mr. Krishna Menon," "Sir Rustum Masani" and "Sir Frank Brown" (Eastern Editor of *The Times*) are not only striking likenesses but revelations of character. Gandhi, the artist tells me, refuses to pose for more than two minutes together; and accordingly a special word of praise is due to the effective study of the Mahatma striding towards the spectator—and quite possibly out of the room.

If Rao will continue his experiments on plywood (he has two brilliant panels in this exhibition) and improve his modelling I believe he will one day be a notable portrait painter.

N. A. D. W.



"Shall we have the nine o'clock news, dear—or haven't you got over the six o'clock yet?"



"Ah yes—this is the one where the view alone is worth the money."

Night-Letter from Dublin

RIGHT away I must admit that this guide to Dublin's night-life will be quite useless to the English visitor. His night-life begins and ends at the dinner-table. By the time he has unbelievably lifted up his steak to see if there is a plate underneath and has set his jaws to their unaccustomed work the theatres and cinemas are closed and the publicans are beginning to say "Time!" as though they meant it. (The English visitor is not to know that this forgiving minute can be filled with another half-hour or so of drinking.) He must either rest his indigestion among the ferns of the hotel lounge or carry it upstairs to give him nightmares in bed.

I did try to find a night-club for him, but I don't think his holiday passion for exoticism would be satisfied at the Club du Masque, which is not nearly so mysterious as its name implies.

Dublin night-clubs in the past which tried to be mysterious usually found themselves visited by Garda Murphy who subsequently would give evidence in court that he ordered a pot of tea and poured from it a substance which he could reasonably suspect of being porter. They found themselves in a social difficulty as well. London night-clubs offer drinking and dancing together, but this pale English compromise is no good to Dublin where the men want to drink and the women to dance—exclusively. Normally dances are arranged to begin after the pubs close, so that men can enjoy the first half of the evening and women the second. It is a reasonable but exhausting system. I should add here that one of the ration-book sellers of Grafton Street (he deals in newspapers as a sideline) was last summer offering English visitors membership cards of the "Cuban Cabin" night-club for ten

shillings each. There was no "Cuban Cabin," but your man was proud of his city and hated to think that there was no holeful of tobacco smoke and rhumba rhythm where the Englishman could feel at home. And he had his wife and family to think of.

The visitor will have to get through that steak by seven-thirty if he wants to visit the Abbey Theatre, and he will have to come to Dublin pretty soon, before the entire Abbey cast is spirited away by Mr. Rank or Mr. Goldwyn. The current production of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* sadly misses the late F. J. McCormick, who, with his wife, was one of the few resisters to the lure; indeed he returned from Hollywood to the Abbey to act for £7 a week. Without him there is no Fluther Good in the play any more. The small-part players at the Abbey are still the best on the English-speaking stage, but as

soon as they gain any experience the studio wolves are howling after them up O'Connell Street. And there are strange tales of what they do when they capture one. Only the other day a fellow called Kieron O h-anrrachain went over to London with his Kerry accent, and they say he will be back soon, on the screen, as Kieron Moore and speaking Italian.

But I can promise that Hilton Edwards, Micheal MacLiammoir and their Gate Theatre Company, which they founded in 1928, will still be at the Gaiety. Like the Abbey, they live mainly by revivals—at the moment they offer a capital *John Bull's Other Island*—but though this sounds unhealthy the patients are so robust that they prosper. The visitor must not condemn Dubliners if they seem apathetic about a play which he thinks supremely good, for they have probably seen it all before and would prefer novelty at any price. Recently they packed Mr. Micheal MacLiammoir's production of his new play, *Portrait of Miriam*, despite the fact that one critic called it, unkindly but not unreasonably, money for ham.

Perhaps it was the knowledge that Dubliners criticize the old faces just because they are old faces that made Lord Longford's company go all oriental at the Gate Theatre in his lordship's own play, *Armet of Jade*. They hold the eye in authentic and beautiful Chinese robes, and the loaded air is full of droned *om mane padme hum's* which sound startlingly like a Latin liturgy. But Dublin hasn't been nearly so keen to see them as it was to greet the imported film star, Mr. Burgess Meredith, who came to brood for a fortnight over *Winterset*, with interjections by Miss Paulette Goddard.

When the Englishman visits the music-halls he will find the meat and the poison reversed—Dubliners howling with delight at turns he imagined were decently buried years ago. Dear old pals, jolly old pals, they turn up here like shining new pennies. At the Queen's, if he is lucky, he will also get twenty minutes of tense, gripping drama (blessed if it wasn't *The Monkey's Paw* last week) played almost exclusively to an audience of women, the men being tensely gripped by thirst at about that time. And somewhere there is bound to be Mr. Noel Purcell, the city's reigning comedian, who makes the Dubliner laugh at himself. But even here it doesn't do to be too enthusiastic. I stopped in the middle of laughing at him the other day to ask a small girl by me if he wasn't the funniest person she'd ever seen. She stopped in the middle of

her ice cream and said: "Did you never see Jimmy O'Dea?"

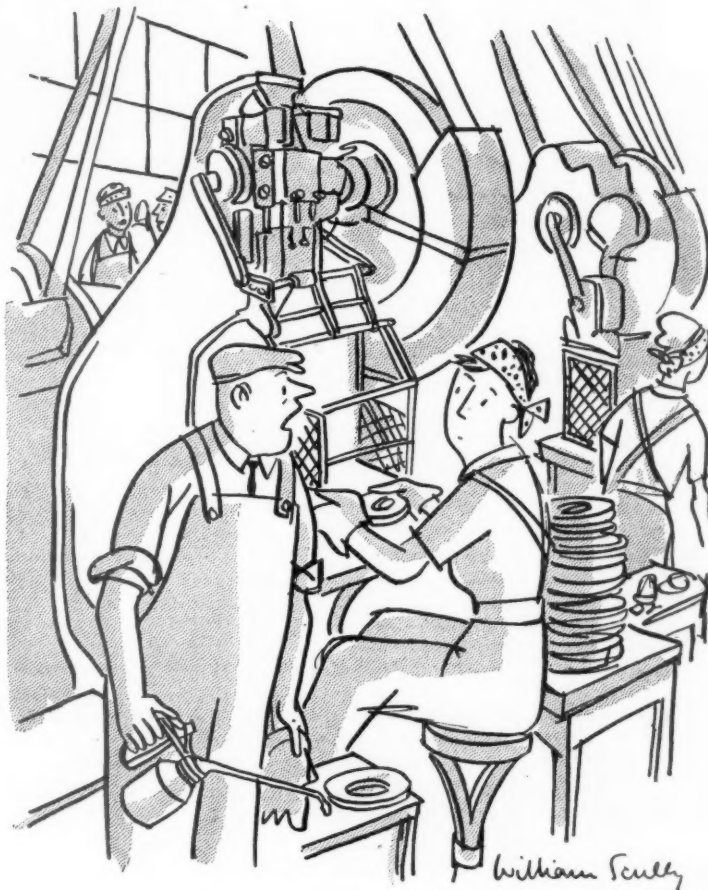
Then at eight o'clock on any evening there are The Dogs, and they have to be taken seriously now that greyhounds are Ireland's fifth biggest export. To the amateur the difficulty would seem to be that every other person in the country owns a greyhound and that, as each of these every other people have about thirty relatives and confidantes, the whole population has two good things for every race, which are sure to win. Not that the game's crooked. Only the other day a fellow impressed on me that once you were sure a dog's trainer was on the level you had nothing to worry about; not like racing, you see, where you have to be sure of the jockey as well.

Of course just at the moment there's a by-election in Dublin and as Irish

politics are the best entertainment of all there's something of a slump in the other departments. But why go on? I can see my visitor eyeing the menu and wondering whether he dare ask for a second jam omelette.

Monday Morning

CAME the dawn freezily,
Stirred I uneasily,
Broodily, moodily
Wheezily, sneezily,
Queasily queer.
Dreamily, dozily
Sally lies rosily,
Cosily, lazily,
Hazily dazily,
Whispering teasingly
"You'll do it easily,
Run along, dear."



"Have you seen the electrician around—the one with the Bergman crop and the imitation pearls?"



"Did you see that film about the Englishman who married an ex-enemy alien?"
 "Oh, you mean Henry the Fifth."

Wild Hat of Alan

Dirge for a hat blown off on the way to the dogs.

WILD Hat of Alan, Pride of Cock and Lion,
 Joy of the George, Lodestone of Lamb and Flag,
 Noblest Hat that e'er a man set eye on,
 Hat that in Pubs men paid a pound to try on,
 Hat without Blemish, hat without a Snag,

World-Famous Hat, much better known than my 'un,
 Talked of wherever Tongues are known to Wag,
 Sung of in Spain and praised by Paraguayan,
 How could I ever put my old pork-pie on
 When Alan could of *thy* perfection brag?

Wild Hat of Alan, woefully we mourn thee,
 Dismally lift our Voice in horrid Wail;
 And how much more must he, who once has worn thee,
 Regret and curse the Demon that has torn thee
 Away from him, disguised as a gale!

No painted feather ever could adorn thee,
 No glittering gem increase thy beauty pale;
 Let us but trust that he who hence has borne thee
 Will not ill-treat, misuse, malign nor scorn thee,
 Nor vulgarly Exhibit thee for Sale.

Wild Hat of Alan, lost in Euston Road
 One night between the Cock and Harringay,
 Where is thy Habitation, thy Abode?
 When from his hurrying Head thy beauty Blowed
 Who picked thee up and carried thee away?

There is no other Hat of such sweet Mode,
 No other felt of such a tender Gray;
 Let's rend our shirts, and paint ourselves with Woad,
 And mourn thee, Hat, that once so brightly glowed,
 And mourn that doleful Hat-departing day.



THE KNIGHT OF THE RED HERRING

MONDAY, October 20th.—

The House of Lords, reassembling after the recess, had the sad task of saying farewell to two well-loved figures—Lord Caldecote, once Lord Chancellor, and Lord Chief Justice, and Lord Passfield, or, as he preferred to remain, Sidney Webb.

Peers of many shades of opinion on almost every subject spoke as one in praise of the two Lords, the one so prominent among them for years, the other a legend, who was rarely seen in the House.

And then the Lord Chancellor, putting a three-cornered hat on the top of his full-bottomed wig, and supported by four other noblemen wearing their robes of ermine, read the King's Speech summing up the work of the Parliamentary session. Mr. F. W. LASCELLES, the Reading Clerk, recited the Royal Commission proroguing the session, and everybody went home.

TUESDAY, October 21st.—THE

KING, in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet, THE QUEEN, in turquoise blue, and Princess ELIZABETH, in dusty pink (details kindly and sibilantly supplied, *sotto voce* and otherwise, by nearby ladies) took their places on gilt and crimson thrones in the House of Lords, and THE KING opened the new session.

The scene was as colourful as ever. A score of King's Bench judges supplied a touch of scarlet with their robes. Peeresses wore the best that coupons and controls permitted (it all looked very charming) and even a few of the Peers wore button-holes.

THE KING's voice rang through the Gilded Chamber as he read the long speech, outlining the list of Bills the Government proposes to bring forward. There were to be Bills on the penal system, on the care of children, on the nationality of married women, and many other things.

And . . . there was to be a Bill to amend the Parliament Act, 1911. Even the stately and sedate assembly showed some surprise at this announcement, for it indicated—to those who knew their Statute Book—that the Government really intended to carry out its threat to "reform" the House of Lords.

With bows to their Lordships and the faithful Commons, Their Majesties, followed by the Princess, who had made her first official appearance at a State opening, took their leave.

Scarcely had they left the Chamber before an army of workmen, commanded by Mr. A. W. Hattersley, the

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, October 20th.—Both Houses: Farewell and—

Tuesday, October 21st.—Both Houses: —Hail!

Wednesday, October 22nd.—House of Commons: Congratulations—and Members' Time. House of Lords: Their Future.

Thursday, October 23rd.—House of Commons: More Austerity.

Resident Engineer, and Mr. C. J. Greenaway, Deputy Keeper of the Palace of Westminster, swooped. In a sort of calm and methodical frenzy of reconstruction, they swept away the thrones, the carpets, the Diplomatic Box, the very Woolsack. In an hour or two the Upper House was



Impressions of Parliamentarians

18. Miss Herbison (Lanark, Northern).

transformed once more into the Lower House, ready for the sitting of the Commons.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker had led the Commons off to temporary quarters in St. Stephen's Hall, which normally serves the purpose of a passage. There, the same scene-shifting geniuses had put up a perfect miniature House of Commons, complete with Speaker's Chair, and rows of chairs for Government and Opposition M.P.s. Their Lordships surrendered their ancestral home once more to the Great Elected, and returned to their bijou residence (with most mod. con.) in the King's Robing Room.

And the moment the Commons had left their St. Stephen's "prefab" (as one Minister irreverently called it) that, too, was torn asunder and dismantled. And, ere long, all was normal again.

Their Lordships were not a little startled to hear Lord SALISBURY, leading the Opposition, use harsh words

about the Government's proposal to "reform" their House. Lord S. considered this the result of a shady and shabby political deal, or the price exacted by some Ministers for their agreement to the postponement of the nationalization of the iron and steel industry. As if to reassure those who thought

they had mis-heard, the noble Marquess repeated that it was a "wholly disreputable procedure and a dingy political deal." Anyway, there should be a general election before the reforms were proposed, for any further cutting of the Lords' right of veto on legislation meant One-Chamber Government. And that was a step towards dictatorship.

Over in the Commons (after Mr. WILL BLYTON and Miss MARGARET HERBISON had ably moved and seconded an Address of Thanks to THE KING for the speech from the Throne) Mr. ANTHONY EDEN also asked for some information about the Lords' reform plans. He remarked caustically that reform of the House of Peers and the nationalization of the gas industry left something to be desired as a means of solving the nation's grave economic troubles and problems.

The Prime Minister mentioned that the "reform" was to consist of cutting from two years to one the period of veto that could be used by the Lords against a Bill passed by the Commons. Mr. ATTLEE argued that the Lords had never used the veto—and therefore would never miss it. Anyway, the Government wanted to do it, had the majority in the Commons to do it—and therefore would do it.

Mr. CHURCHILL snapped that it was a deliberate piece of social aggression, but Mr. ATTLEE was not shaken.

After a further exchange of back-chat between back-benchers, the day's debate was ended. But, beyond doubt, more will be heard of many things in—and not in—the King's Speech.

WEDNESDAY, October 22nd.—The tumult and the shouting having (at least temporarily) died, and the scene having been restored more or less to normal, the House of Commons proceeded to go all domestic and to spend hours and hours arguing about the right of the Government to monopolize time in the coming session.

But before they got to that, honourable Members passed with acclamation a motion congratulating Their Majesties on the engagement of Princess ELIZABETH to Lieut. PHILIP MOUNTBATTEN



"We're from the Ministry of Food—we've had orders to stock your moat with fish."

—"this young sailor," as Mr. CHURCHILL called him. The Prime Minister, a master of the felicitous phrase and with just the right avuncular tone, moved the motion, and Mr. CHURCHILL seconded. Both gained cheers from all parts of the House when they wished the Princess and her husband-to-be every happiness.

Mr. WILLIE GALLACHER, the front-half of the Communist Party, who has so often in the past shown himself to be deeply human and sympathetic, seemed to have an off-day, for he engaged in some comments of more than doubtful taste. Scarcely had he sat down before Mr. JOHN MCGOVERN, who announced himself as a Republican, jumped up and—proceeded to "wipe the floor" with the Communist spokesman.

To the delighted cheers of the entire House (Mr. GALLACHER dissenting) Mr. MCGOVERN commented that the Communist's speech had been "disgraceful" and that it ought never to have been made on the occasion of the marriage of a "young couple." Moreover, the more he saw of the Red Royal Family in Moscow, said Mr. MCGOVERN, eyeing Mr. GALLACHER, the more convinced was he that the British

Royal Family had a secure place in the hearts of the people of Britain. A popular speech.

The congratulatory motion was then passed *nemine contradicente*.

The discussion on Private Members' time was based on a motion by Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Leader of the House, that the Government should appropriate all the time of the session. He cheerfully forecast that there would be indignation, fire and fury from the back-benchers—and his prophecy was amply borne out. All three Parliamentary commodities were produced, and the debate went on for a long time. But in the end (as Mr. MORRISON might also have forecast) the Government got its way.

Then the debate on the Address of Thanks was resumed in a desultory sort of way.

Their Lordships had a good deal to say about The King's Speech ere they too went home at last.

But they heard, before they went, a powerful plea by the Archbishop of Canterbury that the Government should not precipitate a "dog-fight" by persisting in the plan to reform the Lords. Lord LISTOWEL, for the Cabinet, promised to ponder this plea deeply.

THURSDAY, October 23rd.—Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, Minister of Economic Affairs, took the centre of the stage in the Commons to-day (after a curtain-raiser in which Mr. CHURCHILL played the lead in defence of the Royal Navy against cuts by the Government) with a recital of Britain's economic position.

He announced cuts of £200,000,000 in capital spending, some £66,000,000 in food imports, and a number of other large-scale austerities. The House gasped a bit, but was lost in wonder at Sir STAFFORD's grip of his subject—and the extremely reasonable way in which he put it all.

It was a curious commentary on things in general that the only vacant seats in the Chamber during Sir STAFFORD's ninety-minutes' speech were to be found on the floor of the House. The galleries were crammed with grave-faced listeners, who found nothing in the matter of the speech to sweep the gravity from their glances.

But they were clearly moved by Sir STAFFORD's peroration calling on all to fight for economic victory, as they had fought for military triumph, in a spirit of "self-sacrifice, honour, love or comradeship, call it what you will."



"I should never 'ave the patience!"

Two Thousand Economists Washed Ashore.

ARE we totally incapable of profiting by experience? Must we always be caught hopelessly unprepared, physically and psychologically, for these national emergencies? I am beginning to fear that we are and must.

Consider this, our latest ordeal. Were we told when to expect it? Well, the first thing I knew about a crisis was when I saw people digging feverishly in their back gardens and planting potatoes. That was all the warning I got. Were we told *what* to expect? No, even when the storm had broken only a handful of people understood the seriousness of the situation. "All over by Christmas," said the rest.

People are still puzzled and give ear willingly to the most dreadful rumours. There's the one about thousands of economists being washed up along the beaches of the South Coast. That's an unpleasant business, if you like! And the one about cardboard cars being loaded at Liverpool as propaganda for export!

I blame the Government. They must have known well beforehand that a crisis of this magnitude would

completely flummox the public, and yet no free issue of economic text-books was made! Why? The British people have a right to know.

Like scores of my countrymen I have thrown most of my all into this struggle, and I still don't know what we are fighting for—or, to put it bluntly, what major issues are at stake.

But let me turn from the general to the particular and expose my dilemma as dramatically as possible. Before me as I write lies my scrapbook of current affairs. I turn its pages idly, pausing now and again to suck at an empty pipe . . . Hello! What's this? The depressing story of how a certain country managed to dump wheat all over Europe while its own people were starving. Two pictures set in startling juxtaposition. People dying like flies on the prairies, puztas, steppes or whatever they are, and grain-ships rushing food out of the country at breakneck speed. Well, well! The year, if my informant's memory served him correct, was 1929.

And now, breathless with excitement, I flip through the pages at lightning speed . . .

We are back in 1947 and . . . Oh, look! Here is Mr. Peter Thorneycroft urging the immediate export of several million tons of British coal. And here is Professor Lionel Robbins leading a mass of opinion in the same direction.

Now, I am not asking you to piece these various scraps together or anything like that. I am merely painting in a bit of realistic background before I set the pages turning again and conduct you to another cutting for the year A.D. 2047:

"After the war the fuel situation in Britain deteriorated very sharply," writes Mr. Olaf Susswelt, the famous historian, "and industry was gravely handicapped. Many factories had to close down. Domestic supplies of fuel were rationed, gas lost its pressure. To rely on electricity was to risk death by a thousand cuts. Unless they got jobs at the cinemas people froze."

"Imports of coal from America declined.

"Faced with these shocking difficulties the Government of the day decided upon a bold, almost revolutionary, stroke. They decided to export coal in considerable quantity.

For a time the venture was an unqualified success. The miners responded splendidly and coal production reached record heights. No one was surprised, therefore, when the experiment was extended to other commodities. In 1949 Britain began to export bacon and eggs, wheat and whale-meat. The public outcry against these measures was bitter and prolonged, but the poultry-farmers and pig-breeders responded magnificently.

"After this it seemed that nothing could stop Britain in her drive for economic prosperity. One after the other her industries received curative treatment. Whenever goods were scarce they were exported at top speed. By the summer of 1951 the President of the Board of Trade was beginning to think about bananas . . .

"In ten years Britain had paid off her debts in full and had bought Alaska from the U.S.A. and the Crimea from Russia. The figures for these transfers were not disclosed, but were understood to be in the region of 900 million tons (best coking).

"It was inevitable of course that other countries should sooner or later adopt the economic doctrine which had proved such a spectacular success in Britain. British economists now secured well-paid jobs in all parts of the world. Spain forged ahead. She was followed by France, India, Denmark, Pakistan . . . Some of the smaller countries did particularly well. Albania went in for television-sets in a big way, Bulgaria for refrigerators and petrol-lighters. It soon became distressingly obvious that Albania's success was no flash-in-the-pan, that in the new set-up the economic advantage rested with the poorer countries. By 1970 Britain, the U.S.A. and Russia were casting envious eyes at the shortages of the small nations . . .

"And then, in 1975 . . . But there is no need to weary the reader with another recital of that nightmare."

Well, there you are. A pretty grim picture, eh? But before I close my scrapbook let me draw your attention to one more item. It is another version of the same story—this time from the pen of Juno Umlaut, distinguished reporter of the *Tokio Globe-Mail*. It is dated A.D. 1987.

"The British Government's decision to export coal (in spite of chronic domestic shortage) was attended by disastrous results. The miners did not respond to the challenge and output declined. In a desperate effort to quicken the pulse of the mining communities and fire the patriotism of the whole people the export figure was raised to 30 million tons. There was

still no response. One by one industries collapsed for lack of fuel and unemployment soared. A succession of cold winters killed off the population at an alarming rate and an almost frantic Government issued memorial certificates to the bereaved:

This Is To Certify
that John Smith, OPJX/133/1,
has been posthumously awarded the
Order of Invisible Exports (First Class)
For Valour:

The documents were signed by the Minister of Economic Affairs, the Chairman of the National Coal Board and the Controller of Paper and Wood-pulp. It was the least they could do.

"But these things cut no ice, as it were. The people lost faith and turned their eyes hungrily overseas in whichever direction their coal happened to be travelling. Emigration was of course prohibited and the screening of coal had to be improved. It became increasingly difficult to sift the 'brights' and 'best hards' from the stowaways . . .

"And then, in 1975 . . . But there is no need to weary the reader with the details of that terrible calamity."

That is all. I am not going to say which of these accounts is the correct one. All I want is your support. Let us press the Government into action now. Let them issue those text-books before it is too late. But let them keep back a dozen or more copies for an emergency. See, what is the strength of the Cabinet now? HOD.

o o

Notice to Travellers

IT is our wish that travellers shall not bring samples to no purpose, and therefore if it should happen that an interview cannot be granted at the time, arrangements may be made with the receptionist to leave samples for us to go into in due course. Part of our staff cloakroom has been specially allotted for clothing samples, while food ditto also have a place waiting for them in the canteen kitchen. The co-operation of travellers is sought in making these facilities work amicably, and as the scheme has not been in operation for quite as long as some of the travellers say they have had to wait for the return of samples, these points will be taken up the same as any other challenge when there is time for no other recourse. Any apparent laxity on our part is due largely to the more inexperienced travellers being so

anxious for their goods to be seen that our sample service has become overloaded, and this causes our secretaries to overlap. We feel confident that the experience of one salesman who brought wine samples and got patent arch-support suspenders back is not a common one. Nor is that of the gentleman who declined our order for umbrellas on the grounds that the sample was his own and the price was the cloakroom number where he found it. We also make light, in passing, of the absent-minded element who think they have left or loaned their fountain-pens at every call, as we provide a pencil on a chain for this purpose.

If these difficulties are taken into consideration, we know our commercial friends will support our claim that no traveller is ever turned away unless empty-handed.

J. TINGLE,
Branch Janitor.

o o

Fire Alarm

LIKE the squeal
Of pigs at a meal
Or the squeak of a swinging
gate;
A gale on the downs
The traffic in towns
Are none of them sounds I hate.
I can get a thrill
From a good road-drill
Or the music of racing hounds . . .
But my inside turns right over still
Whenever the siren sounds!

I love the din
When a ship comes in,
The hoots and the clangs and the
cheering.
A bell with a flaw
Or a circular saw
Are noises I don't mind hearing,
Nor the screaming of gulls
Over surf-drenched hulls
That a raging tempest pounds . . .
But my whole inside

turns
OVER
Whenever that siren sounds.
It cringes and turns right over and
waits
The second that siren sounds.

o o

"Don't Go Down the Mine, Bevis!"
"Wanted, copy, good condition, 'Bevin,
Story of a Boy.'—Adv. in *Glasgow paper*.

"JOHN walks across to the well-stocked tray of drinks on the side table and helps himself to a stiff whisky-and-soda." So many dramatists are still happily inserting mendacious bits of business like this that it is a pleasant change to find a play in which water is realistically laid on. Lately I seem to have suffered from a long succession of vicarious hangovers. It can be deeply disturbing to the most moderate of men to keep on being separated by the footlights from hospitable hosts with hidden pipe-lines, even if he knows well enough at the back of his mind that what is going on is in fact a perfectly horrible orgy of cold tea.

I am tempted to digress thus by seeing a play honest in this respect, though its people could certainly do with a restorative: Mr. WYNYARD BROWNE's *Dark Summer*, at the Lyric, Hammersmith. It is honest in more important respects as well, and is very nearly of a kind to make the critic bang the little bell on the end of his typewriter and cheer. Unfortunately Mr. BROWNE has been possessed by two good themes at once, and each treads damagingly on the toes of the other till the centre of gravity shifts completely. Further, although Mr. BROWNE demonstrates with four of his characters that he understands human quirks and can limn them truly, he falls down mysteriously on his fifth, who happens to be the pivot of Theme No. 1. This is a blinded airman so swamped by a fussy and possessive mother that he is unable to arrive at any mental or emotional trim. Here is a grand subject for a dramatist, raising all manner of promising questions; but just as we are all ready to pursue it *Stephen* spoils everything by showing himself a poor fish and a singularly dull young man, quite incapable with or without his eyes of fighting for his independence. He is at the mercy of three women who adore him: his mother, a lady in moral blinkers, mercilessly intolerant; his fiancée, a far more Christian person, though educated in the principal European casinos; and the cook, a

At the Play

Dark Summer (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)—*Deliver My Darling* (EMBASSY).

German Jewish refugee with a science diploma, a heart of gold and an exceedingly plain exterior. His mother's antagonism at first scuppers *Judy*. While still blind he becomes engaged to *Gisela*, the cook, who alone understands his suffering. Miraculously cured, he is still prepared to marry her, but *Gisela* has seen his start of surprise at his first glimpse of her

emancipation and principle, and Miss NORA NICHOLSON gives an amusing sketch of a suburban adder obsessed by gentility. Mr. DAN CUNNINGHAM as *Stephen* might deal more crisply, I think, with his slender opportunities. Mr. FRITH BANBURY produced.

At the Embassy *Deliver My Darling*, by Miss JOAN (No Room At The Inn)

TEMPLE, is worth seeing for another terrific performance by that human harrow, Miss FREDA JACKSON, produced by Mr. ANTHONY HAWTREY and Mr. PETER DEARING. As a play it is rather a one-man band, with a number of slight instrumentalists tooting complementarily, but it should certainly be seen for Miss JACKSON. Miss MAY HALLATT starts things off on a grimly macabre note, a dying widow bribing an unhappy girl with the village shop to marry and take care of her idiot son; and after that we watch the girl's terrible decline into near-madness. Terrible, but not tragic, for her consuming bitterness is so inherent that it precludes sympathy, even though luck is solidly against her. The man she loves marries another; the old woman's promised fortune is nothing but a crushing mortgage; and a clownish and stuttering husband proves a humiliating barrier to the girl's petty social ambitions. When at length he turns dumbly on her lover from the black market she knifes him. There, in a magnificently telling moment when the spirit of the old woman returns to haunt her, the play should end, instead of continuing through several rather sentimental minutes of anti-climax. Miss JACKSON is unbeatable at this game of green passions double-distilled, of screaming soul-searing frenzy by evil out of darkness. When I mentioned a one-man band I was not after all being fair to Mr. DAVID GREENE, whose gentle clucking giant, of the same family as the simpleton in *Of Mice and Men*, is brilliantly played and curiously moving. ERIC.



[*Dark Summer*]

LOVE v. SELF-PITY

MIXED FOURSOME AT HAMMERSMITH

<i>Judy Van Haan</i>	MISS ANNABEL MAULE
<i>Stephen Hadow</i>	MR. DAN CUNNINGHAM
<i>Gisela Waldstein</i>	MISS JOAN MILLER
<i>Mrs. Hadow</i>	MISS JEAN CADELL

(a very dramatic moment, this) and, secretly arranging for *Judy* to come back, throws them into each other's arms. By this time *Stephen* is a mere pawn in Theme No. 2, which is the unthinkable agony of having survived a concentration camp to have your heart broken in a foreign land. Obviously the play is not as strong as it might have been, in either direction, but nevertheless it has much good in it and shows its author to be a man worth watching. *Gisela* is well drawn and played powerfully, though with occasional awkward pauses, by Miss JOAN MILLER, who has been heroically unkind to her face. Miss JEAN

from the black market she knifes him. There, in a magnificently telling moment when the spirit of the old woman returns to haunt her, the play should end, instead of continuing through several rather sentimental minutes of anti-climax. Miss JACKSON is unbeatable at this game of green passions double-distilled, of screaming soul-searing frenzy by evil out of darkness. When I mentioned a one-man band I was not after all being fair to Mr. DAVID GREENE, whose gentle clucking giant, of the same family as the simpleton in *Of Mice and Men*, is brilliantly played and curiously moving. ERIC.

At the Opera

Faust (SADLER'S WELLS)

AFTER an absence of seven years GOUNOD's *Faust*, in a new production, is back in the repertory at Sadler's Wells. A packed house and rapturous applause on the first night showed that its popularity is undimmed—which is not to be wondered at, for no other opera provides such a feast of emotion. It runs the gamut of drama, comedy, romance, tragedy, sardonic humour and sentimental religiosity. DENNIS ARUNDELL, the producer, aided by JOSEPH CARL (designer) and PAULINE GRANT (choreographer), has added to the heady emotional brew an aura of mysticism, a spice of satanism and plenty of *Sturm und Drang*. Mr. CARL has devised a simple setting that is a marvel of adaptability. It consists of a flight of steps leading to a platform which, by the aid of simple additions and transmutations of lighting, serves in turn as *Faust's* study (enveloped in a Gothic gloom, of which more anon), a booth at the Easter Fair, *Marguerite's* house, the summit of the Brocken with the flames of Hell shining from below, a prison and the gateway to Heaven. For the singers, however, it is hazardous in the extreme. The stage is so dark in the first act that not all *Faust's* attainments as listed by GOETHE enable him to descend from his dizzy turret without a hurricane-lamp, and *Mephistopheles* will need all the Powers of Darkness and *Marguerite* a squad of reliable angels in the Stygian gloom of the last act if they are to survive half a dozen performances without broken limbs.

The cathedral scene is a great success. The coloured light of a stained-glass window falls on the kneeling figure of *Marguerite*, and a cross carried by a priest is the only other point of light on the stage. A half-seen chorus of priests approaching gradually nearer to *Marguerite* turns the "Dies Ira" into a terrifying pronouncement of doom, and the whole scene is splendidly built up to its final climax when *Mephistopheles* triumphantly claims her soul as his. As she cries out in despair the stage is blacked out and a huge cross of light appears—an effect both striking and impressive.

The singing and MICHAEL MUDIE'S conducting are very good indeed. MARION LOWE (*Marguerite*) and JAMES JOHNSTON (*Faust*) are very well cast. Our favourite character, however, has always been *Mephistopheles*, and in this rôle HOWELL GLYNNE vocally is

splendid. His Song of the Golden Calf (whose accompaniment of leaping orchestral flames never fails to send a thrill down the spine), his Serenade and his mocking laughter are all that one could desire. But could a fiend not conjure up a guitar?

Mr. ARUNDELL never shrinks from experiments, however daring. He who has put on to the stage a character in *Tosca* whom PUCCINI made invisible and who has staged the Venetian *I Quattro Rusteghi* in Georgian London could be expected to make mincemeat (and here we agree with him) of what he calls the "flaxen plait and *fouetté*" type of production that *Faust* traditionally receives. All the same, *Mephistopheles* is not the Devil. He is the companion given to *Faust* by the Earth-spirit, and personifies the baser element in *Faust's* character. He is young, handsome and debonair, all crisp and crackling from the infernal regions. GOUNOD's librettists give him a feather in his hat and a rich cloak on his shoulder, and GOETHE adds a gold-laced scarlet vest. Here he is dressed in rusty black and looks like a sexton newly emerged from an exceedingly damp vault. Mr. ARUNDELL, probably to lend the opera a deeper significance,

has tried to turn him into a ponderous and all-embracing principle of Evil, which he is not, either in GOETHE or in GOUNOD's music. The satanic ballet, with the stage covered with writhing grey figures, is out of the picture too. The music is too slight to support visions of the infernal in the style of GUSTAVE DORÉ, even if the damned do writhe in waltz-rhythm—which we doubt. None the less, we recommend opera-lovers to see this imaginative production. They will certainly enjoy it.

* * * * *

The first of the B.B.C. winter symphony concerts was notable for a distinguished performance of VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's *London Symphony*, conducted by the composer as part of the celebrations of his seventy-fifth birthday. Mr. Punch offers his warm congratulations on this event. The programme also contained a performance of the BRAHMS Violin Concerto by SZIGETI, playing his superb best. We shall long remember the mellow glory of his tone in the slow movement and a last movement like showers of sparks struck from the anvil of Thor. D. C. B.





"I know it's a matter of life and death of course, but the Government haven't really convinced me yet of the seriousness of this crisis."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Best of New Hampshire

Two American strains, both irresistible to the country-minded, have gone to the making of *Green Corners* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 10/6). One could have guessed, apart from a tell-tale quotation, that Mrs. BERTHA DAMON had sat at the feet of that most delectable of New England annalists, Mary E. Wilkins. Her love for "old-timers," however, is wedded to a spirit of prowess akin to that of *Concertina Farm* and *Pleasant Valley*. She began—a typical transatlantic pioneer—by taking the top-soil off "the Damon place." She was equally typical in seeing the error of her ways and putting it back. So her book has a horticultural pattern against whose arabesques the human and animal figures of her household and neighbours delightfully rear. The most notable of the latter is an "old-timer," Hannah Sprague, "beautiful . . . as an old lilac-bush by the back-door," whose white clap-boarded house is given precedence over the writer's own as being a more perfect—as well as more amusing—illustration of the Spoon River adage "it takes life to love life." Yet although Mrs. DAMON has handed the palm to Hannah, one is pretty sure Hannah would hand it back to Mrs. DAMON: and rightly because it is much harder to improvise the pattern of the good life now, than to continue that of sixty years ago. H. P. E.

Q

Mr. F. BRITAIN's short and well-proportioned biography of *Arthur Quiller-Couch* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 15/-) gives a very attractive and lifelike impression of its subject. Q, his signature when he was writing for the *Oxford Magazine* in his early twenties, was what everyone

called Quiller-Couch, and it is as Q that Mr. BRITAIN writes of him. Q had a hard struggle in his youth, supporting his mother, two brothers and two sisters, paying off his father's considerable debts, and still further complicating his position with a marriage, which, however, turned out extremely well. In his late twenties he had a breakdown, and left London for Fowey in his native Cornwall. As his novels show, Cornwall held his deepest affections, and Fowey remained his home till his death in 1944, though from 1912 onwards he had another home in Cambridge, where he was Professor of English Literature. Q was a Liberal in politics, a traditionalist in literature. As a Liberal he disapproved the Boer War, and momentarily alienated even Fowey opinion by taking the chair for Lloyd George, who was opposing the war. As a traditionalist, with a strong Celtic bias, he disliked equally the German influence on literary criticism, psycho-analysis, Virginia Woolf, and G. M. Hopkins, whom he described as "a precious, priestly, hot-house darling with (to my mind) no ear but a thumb." But there was no rancour in his prejudices, and the deepest impression left by this book is of his generous and kindly nature. H. K.

An American Childhood

Life in the 'seventies for a happy country family, with the Hudson River and the Catskills as familiars, must have been in many ways very enviable; as described by Mr. THOMAS L. LAMONT in *My Boyhood in a Parsonage* (HEINEMANN, 12/6), it glows with a calmness and simplicity unknown to all but a lucky few of the restless and machine-thrilled children of to-day. If there was a shadow it was Sin, for Fundamentalism stalked the land, and Mr. LAMONT's father, though tolerant himself and a good classical scholar, was a Methodist minister, and his offspring, godlier than the little Presbyterians who suspended their Sunday devotions to go for walks, were expected to conform. It seems to have done them no noticeable harm, partly perhaps because they had a gay Irish mother and partly, certainly, because they were encouraged to read and read widely. And they seldom lacked for company. Large numbers of prolific aunts and uncles provided a clan which came together whenever possible for mighty and heart-warming reunions. This is a delightful account of a united family, written with a gentle subacidity which sees Puritan excesses ironically and yet leaves sympathy and affection quite unblurred; and its later descriptions of school and Harvard and journalism are absorbing. Mr. LAMONT's system of bookkeeping while business editor of the *Harvard Monthly*, which hinged on two jam-jars on his mantelpiece, one in and one out, was bound to take him to the top in finance; and as Englishmen have reason to know, and particularly lovers of Stratford and Canterbury, whose generous friend he has been, he succeeded to the tune of becoming chairman of J. P. Morgan and Co. E. O. D. K.

Mrs. Millin's War Diary

Fire Out of Heaven (FABER, 16/-), the fifth volume of Mrs. SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN's War Diary, covers the period from September 1st 1943 to September 1st 1944. It must be admitted that this section of the remarkable panorama Mrs. MILLIN is unrolling of the war as seen from South Africa is less readable than the previous ones. This, no doubt, is chiefly the fault of the war, which had run through its most dramatic effects before September 1943. After El Alamein and the German collapse at Stalingrad, the extreme tension of the drama relaxed, and though the title of Mrs. MILLIN's next and final instalment, *The Seven Thunders*, promises that she will make the most of the

atom bomb, the somewhat jaded tone of the present volume suggests that, like Macbeth in Act V, she has supped too full with horrors for her assimilative powers. The fall of Mussolini, the fight up the backbone of Italy, the immense forward sweep of the Russians, D Day, the flying bombs, the attempted assassination of Hitler—they are all here, but blurred. In some degree this is due to the fact that Mrs. MILLIN, although she views the scene from South Africa, is insufficiently detached from it. She is too much absorbed in the tremendous events she records. If they excited her less, they would weary her less, and if she did not think William the Conqueror "the most romantic character in English history," she would illuminate his modern equivalents with a steadier beam.

H. K.

A Tonic for Age

For all those people who persist in using their age as justification for downing every sort of tool, there could be no better tonic than *Faith and Works in Fleet Street* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 6/-), for the author, Mr. J. W. ROBERTSON SCOTT, C.H., wrote part of it this year—writing just as well as ever—and this year is his eighty-second. He gives us his own last two leaders in *The Countryman*, of which he was for twenty-one years founder-editor; about a hundred letters—many with interesting autograph signatures—from well-known men and women, lovers of that publication; and his own first and last leaders in *The New East*, which he founded in Japan in 1917. Here are two remarkable things, the author creates and carries on a highly successful, indeed unique, quarterly at an age when most men are thinking of retiring, and that quarterly is devoted to the truest interests of the English countryside, yet its editor is also an authority on Japan! His interest in agriculture is the key to the situation; that took him to Japan, and his presence there during the 1914-1918 war gave him an opportunity for efforts to explain the Japanese to us and us to the Japanese which have not, perhaps, been sufficiently widely recognized. Quite apart from all that, this present book is as invigorating in its faith in humanity and the future as it is interesting in its account of his work as a journalist.

B. E. S.

Blue-and-White

Oddly enough, Mr. Punch's one link with *English Blue and White Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century* (BATSFORD, 42/-) is the one link omitted from Mr. STANLEY W. FISHER's incomparable book on the subject; for the first blue-and-white young men were the Pre-Raphaelites and their first satirist Du Maurier. Everything else the most ardent potter, aesthete, collector or social historian could possibly want to know about our lovely cobalt-coloured ware is most readably set down here; and the excellent illustrations are deliberately chosen to represent typical examples we might still hope to find, and not inaccessible museum-pieces. There were nine chief potteries: Bow, Chelsea, Lowestoft, Derby, Longton Hall, Bristol, Worcester, Caughley and Liverpool; and endless variants of design, "biscuit" (the unbaked porcelain) and decoration by means of painting, transfers, printing and combinations of these methods. An unusual amount of skilled sleuthing is needed to form a connoisseurs' collection; for although the potters were highly individualistic, they imitated Chinese marks—because their original models were Chinese—and aped each others' special techniques. But back your own fancy and show a few beautiful pieces in a white room furnished with old English oak, elm or even mahogany, and you will never regret your homely and reposeful choice. The book is dedicated to that very discerning collector Queen Mary.

H. P. E.

Thoughtful Britons

Current British Thought No. 1 (NICHOLAS KAYE, 21/-), like its American predecessor, has an atmosphere of having been prepared for export: it is beautifully printed and bound in the American style, and its aim is to give a symposium of the best thought in this country. Foreign buyers, who haven't much time and want to see as much as possible in one group, will find such well-known London figures as George Bernard Shaw, Ivor Brown (who provides an excellent introduction), J. B. Priestley, Harold Nicolson, Stephen Spender, Cyril Connolly, Maclaren-Ross, Herbert Read, Stephen Potter, and George Orwell among others. The reader tends to get the impression that all current British thought takes place regularly in London. Papers represented more than any others are *The New Statesman*, *Horizon*, *To-morrow*, *The Fortnightly Review*, and *New Writing*. Under "Sociology" the interesting but largely ineffectual survey called "The Cost of Letters," which was carried out by *Horizon* a little while ago, has been quite rightly exhumed. What does it cost for a writer to live? Most of the contributors, like M.P.s, suggested a thousand a year; others were more reasonable and thought four hundred sufficient. State patronage was dismissed, though contributors may wonder now whether they can't, after all, be "directed." On the whole the intention of this series (*Latin-American Thought 1947* is the next volume to come out) has been well carried out and readers of all types will find something of interest to them.

R. K.





"... and now I must show you how my new burglar alarm works."

Housing Notes from Paris

IT was a mistake to ask Driver Arkwright to demolish the concrete floor of my cellar. I admit it is a cellar in the hollowest sense of the word, because the only bottles in it are empty, and have been so for a long time. But I like my cellar, although its floor was cracked. Arkwright said he had done a bit with concrete, and if I could lay my hands on a nice bag of cement he would have a go at the floor and lay it lovely.

Well, he had a go, and in half an hour the floor resembled one of those bits of Hamburg docks on which the R.A.F. had lavished more than their usual tender care. Unfortunately the second phase of the exercise—laying it lovely—was suspended indefinitely owing to my failure to lay my hands on any cement.

Arkwright's sustained reproaches, combined with those of my wife, goaded me eventually into action, and yesterday I borrowed my wife's red bicycle and went in search of cement.

I don't know if you have ever gone out to look for cement in Paris. My

own feeling is that this should not be done at all: but if it must be, then certainly not in battle-dress on an August afternoon immediately after lunch, and with the aid of a bicycle. I will explain why in a minute.

The first place I went to, on the advice of a man in a "bistro," was a cement place. That is to say, several million bags of cement were being loaded into lorries, and several million more were being emptied into a barge on the river Seine. If ever a place looked like a place where you might expect to buy a nice bag of cement, that one did.

Well, it wasn't. I went up to a small window and knocked on it. Behind it was a lady dressed in black, writing. I assumed she was totting up the number of bags, and waited respectfully. Ten minutes later she came to the window, looked at me with strong dislike, and was going away when I said "Madame!" as loudly as I dared. She shuddered violently and came back. I said: "Madame, I beg you to excuse the derangement, but one had told me

that here it is possible to buy a little cement."

She looked at me with if anything more distaste than before.

"Here, one does not sell the cement."

I thought a little jocularity might help, and glanced with what I thought was Gallic expressiveness at the several million bags outside.

This was a mistake. Controlling her rising fury, madame said loudly:

"The cement does not sell itself here. Here one delivers it to the Department of Public Works. It is formidable that one should imagine to oneself that the cement could sell itself here."

"How then could one obtain cement?"

"One must go to the Department of Repartition in the Rue de l'Université, number thirteen 'bis,' and there procure oneself a 'bon.'"

The Rue de l'Université was the other side of Paris, and my wife's bicycle was very heavy. Besides, to procure oneself a "bon" would take at

least a year, allowing for changes of policy in the Department. So I gave it up.

I was nearly home when I saw a shed in which two bags of cement were lying in a corner. Reclining with his head on one of the bags was a man in a blue blouse and a white cap. I approached him cautiously, coughed, and saluted. I don't know if it was the salute or the spectacle of a perspiring officer with a red bicycle that did the trick, but in

about thirty seconds I had paid over 150 francs and the man was helping me to put one of the bags of cement on to the carrier.

It didn't stay there long. The front wheel immediately reared up and the bag fell off and burst, covering me with a fine layer of white dust.

When I got home, accompanied by a man with a barrow and the remains of the cement, I found an anxious deputation consisting of my wife, two

workmen (engaged in lieu of Driver Arkwright), and a small boy. The latter said "*Mon Dieu!*" and bolted as soon as he saw me, my wife's face went as white as cement, and the workmen said "*Tiens!*"

The cellar floor has now been laid lovely, at the following cost: Cement, 150 francs; man with barrow, 20 francs; workmen, 200 francs, 20 cigarettes, and a tin of sardines; small boy, one piece of chocolate.

This is Where We Get Out.

EMILY and I have not applied for petrol. On the whole we think the Government was right to stop our motoring. We never really settled down and we can see now that it was largely pride that kept us on the road; though we owed plenty to garages at one time or another.

We started motoring in the early 'thirties, almost unknown to ourselves, through a laughable slip of the tongue at Olympia. We stepped into the motor show out of the rain and arrived home with this family saloon booked to us. Up to that year we had walked everywhere and still felt pretty fresh. However, there it was.

There was nothing wrong with the car. We had to shut our eyes and rise slightly in our seats to change gear, but were told that this was a purely personal idiosyncrasy caught from each other—nothing to do with the machinery. The floor was usually damp, but only because Emily carried a permanent can of water to prevent the radiator from running dry and blowing up in remote districts.

We should have been more at ease of course if one or both of us had mastered the root facts at the start. I suppose we were too excited at first and too harassed later on. I always meant to take a short intensive course in car mechanics, but an inferiority complex kept me back.

A friend of mine learned everything there was to learn about cars by picking up an old one for a song ("In the Gloaming") and incessantly taking it to pieces and putting it together again. It was in the days when dealers didn't know the value of money. This made him a walking encyclopædia but got him practically nowhere. Now and again his surprised wife found herself riding in the car on a short impulsive trip: the rest of the time it was spread round the garden.

Anyhow, we kept our amateur status

and relied mainly on hearsay and garages. I caught my inferiority complex in the garages, and after about 1936 stayed out of them. I could detect scorn in the smallest mechanic, even if he was bending down twenty yards away. I used to lurk in shops or bushes and let Emily ride in and face the experts at the top of her voice.

I suppose the three of us never properly understood one another, though we must have covered a good deal of ground in fifteen-odd years. There was always the sort of tension you get on top of startled horses.

When we began motoring an old hand gave me a tip. He said that everybody else on the road was a fool. (He went further, as a matter of fact.) So when I was driving I always kept a tight grip on the wheel and travelled mostly in third. Emily had to knit to take her mind off me: she said I drove like a statue fighting to come to life. She, on the other hand, took the high line with a loose hectoring style that brooked no obstacle, including the police. She also believed that if you travelled hell-for-leather you hoodwinked more mileage out of your petrol. Her road code was a flexible adaptation that remained perennially fresh and puzzled the authorities. Most of the time she looked thoroughly illegal, but nobody could say just where.

Perhaps our main reason for wishing to get out of motoring was the crush: it had got right out of hand.

Emily is good-hearted, and the paint on our first error of judgment was hardly dry before she was reaching out right and left picking up passengers. It began with relatives and old friends; then Emily gradually pulled in nodding acquaintances, familiar faces and, eventually, dumbfounded strangers.

In the early days there were one or two conscripts. I recall, for example,

a small elderly man in a long coat whom we repeatedly snatched up on the outskirts of the town and discarded in the market-place. He used to sit speechless, clutching the seat. Emily would never believe he didn't want a lift until one day I pointed him out, crouching in a ditch as we hurtled home.

Later the influx dismayed even Emily. Partly it was through misunderstandings. For instance, there were the two spinster sisters who, after a couple of invitations, had us calling for them at 10.30 A.M. prompt every Friday for a shopping trip. And there was the social reformer who used us as a week-end platform most of one summer. But a lot of it was unrestrained enterprise. Long before the free lift campaign we had people stepping into the road and hailing us at fixed times.

The list of "regulars" became so long that I used it for insomnia. I counted people climbing into the back seat and it went on for hours. There were dogs among them.

If it hadn't been for my Home Guard duties and Emily's Red Cross work we should probably have used the war as a pretext to slip off the road unnoticed. As it was, peace found us still running, with a list of patrons building up again. We didn't like to say anything when the world seemed so full of hope.

Recently, however, tempers had shortened. There were sarcastic comments about fresh air—a reference to the holes in the car windows and the fact that the sunshine roof had stuck open. We refused to divert manpower on repairs. A newcomer began giving us insults, thinly disguised as tips on driving. On top of all this we could see ourselves being taken over by the Ministry of Transport.

So when the petrol was cut off at least two short laughs were heard in Britain.

It Sways to Advertise.

"I'll turn round in a minute, sir!" cried the sandwich-man in the teeth of the gale. "I daren't let go o' these railings till I get round the corner."

I nodded approval—he was putting up a magnificent fight. Rigged with boards fore, aft and aloft, rolling and pitching in the wind, he reminded me of yachting days. At last he heeled over and staggered into the lee of a doorway. I congratulated him warmly.

"Why not lower your top board until the wind drops?" I added.

"I can't," he panted, clinging to the door. "It's joined to the lower board at the back, all in one piece."

"So it is. It must be very trying in this weather."

"Just as I've started a big campaign too."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. I'll tell you how it works if you like. D'you see what's printed on the back of me boards?"

"I do. It reads 'GUESS WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE.'"

"That's right—me own idea. Makes you curious, don't it?"

"Oh, I don't know," I replied carelessly.

"It's what we advertising men call a eye-catcher," he went on. "Now, when the public reads 'Guess what's on the other side,' they have a guess and hurry past me to see if they was right, same as *you* did."

"Not at all."

"And then they see this," he said, turning round at last.

He revealed the words, on the front of his boards, "THEY'RE CRUNCHY." He ground his teeth by way of demonstration, and I turned away with a shudder.

"Then you ask me 'What's crunchy, chum?'"

"Do I?"

"Yes," he said, turning back his cuffs, "and with that I darts out me hand and gives you this little twist of paper, containing one free tablet, with compliments."

He did a little bow, which brought his top board forward with a sort of flailing action. The tablet fell to the pavement.

"Don't eat *that* one, sir," he exclaimed, stamping his boot on it. "Where's your hygiene?"

"I was picking up my hat," I replied savagely, flapping my fingers to restore the circulation. I think it was about here that a querulous note crept into my voice. I watched him moodily.

"So then you ask me—'What are they called, chum?'—and I gives you this leaflet."

"It all seems frightfully involved," I commented, sneering as the wind blew it away.

"Dash it!" he said. "There's another one gone! Anyway, it says on this leaflet—'Obtainable at all chemists.' So you go into one and ask for an ounce of these tablets. Guess what happens next?"

"He gives me an ounce of your confounded tablets, I suppose," I said, fixing him with a glassy stare.

"Ho, no."

"Why not?"

"Because he ain't got any."

Now a moment's thought will convince you that an ordinary slashing stroke with an umbrella is wasted on a sandwich-man. A lightning thrust on the flank, between boards, might just reach a vital part, but I dismissed this as too chancy in a gale. I decided instead to resume my journey home.

"Wait a minute," he cried, struggling along beside me.

"Go away," I shouted. "People are looking at us."

"Let 'em wait," he said. "As I was

saying, when the public keeps on asking him for these tablets he sits down and writes out a quick order, and next time you go in—"

"Kindly release my arm before I do you a mischief," I said in icy tones. "This is my station."

The scenes here at rush-hour are unexampled for sheer ferocity. Already a host of would-be passengers were closing in on us. There was a brief, silent scuffle, but before I could tear myself free we were hemmed in and carried helplessly in a solid mass past a frantic ticket-collector. I was touched by my companion's quiet dignity.

"I'm sorry about this," I murmured, as we glided down the moving stairway together. "I should have been more patient. My fault entirely."

"I don't mind," he said. "It's all good publicity."

"All the same—"

A train came in and the doors slid apart. I tried to retreat, but it was too late. The crowd surged forward, and my friend's top board struck the roof of the doorway and crashed down upon us with a loud booming sound. At the same time the rear board rose and cut a sickening swathe among the passengers standing inside. Everything went black, and I seemed to be floating endlessly through an agonized swirl of writhing humanity.

The train was moving out by the time I wrenched my hat up to eye-level again. I just caught a glimpse of him through the windows. It made me realize what a wonderful thing advertising is. His boards had jammed horizontal, like a table, surrounded by a border of livid faces, all guessing what was on the other side. I think they guessed right, too, or else he had told them already.

At any rate they were all grinding their teeth.



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"A bit of orl right!" say Cockney types

See 'ere, these straight-line tufts are just the ticket for getting around them awkward Johnny 'orners.

Would you Adam and Eve it? The tufts are spaced out special to clean between the 'ampstead 'eath.

This 'ere 'arry Randall is bent to fit the old north and south like a turtle dove. The job's all Chatham and Dover in 'alf the bird-time.

D'YOU GET IT?

Johnny Horner = corner
Adam and Eve = believe
Hampstead Heath = teeth
Harry Randall = handle
North and south = mouth
Turtle dove = glove
Chatham and Dover = over
Bird-time = time



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His young children, friendless and alone, were looked after by The Salvation Army during their father's trial. Since his execution, the children have found in a Salvation Army Home the love and care denied them in the squalor and misery of their early years. They are growing up normal, happy children, soon to take their places as useful citizens.

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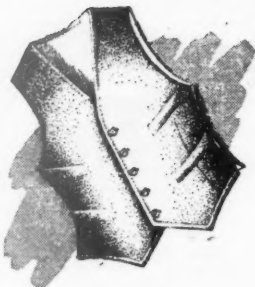
Deep-rooted in our soil, the English Inn, like the English Oak, still flourishes among us, offering shelter to all. Time has dealt with it gently, piloting it from the days of Dan Chaucer down the long Georgian vista, zenith of coaching days, to the present, when the name Whitbread is a sign of the best contemporary hospitality.

Estd. 1762

WHITBREAD

Brewers of Ale and Stout

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The
Maevest

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"You can SEE my teeth are whiter!"

Your mirror will reveal a new, pearly whiteness when you smile—after a week of using Pepsodent, the toothpaste made with Irium. No more effective tooth-cleaning substance than Irium is known to dental science—and it is exclusive to Pepsodent. Softly and gently, it emulsifies and washes away the dull stains and harmful film that dim the natural brilliance of your smile. Your teeth are left gleaming, lustrous, whiter than you have seen them since nursery days! Use Pepsodent twice a day—see your dentist twice a year.

It's the Irium in
Pepsodent toothpaste
that gives you
sparkling white teeth

To strengthen your Nerves



NERVOUS debility may be aggravated by worry and mental strain, but the basic cause is often a general run-down condition and impoverished blood.

A course of Phyllosan tablets will fortify your blood, re-invigorate your constitution, and restore the tone of your nervous system—so start taking Phyllosan tablets to-day!



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Angier's
IS THE ANSWER

Resistance to colds, chills, influenza, and bronchitis is best built up by a course of Angier's Emulsion. It is invaluable for maintaining bodily tone and vigour. It gives strength to the entire system and thus lessens the risks of infection. Angier's is both healing and strengthening and is a most palatable emulsion. It can be assimilated by young and old.



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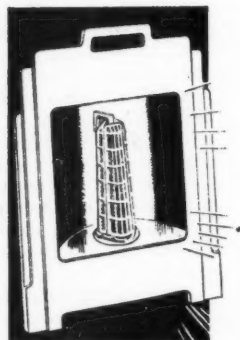
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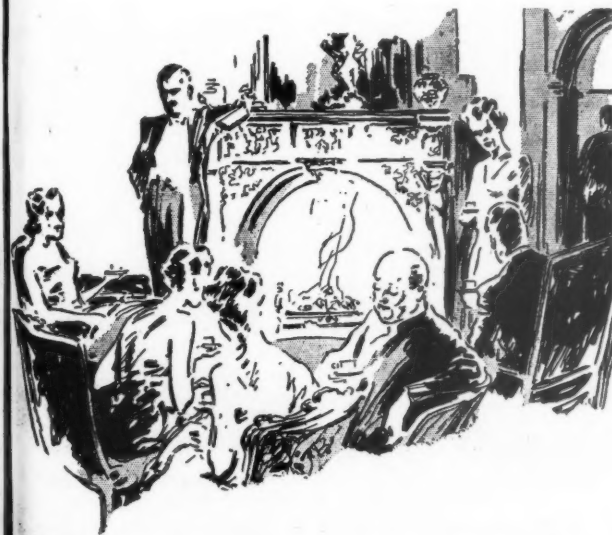
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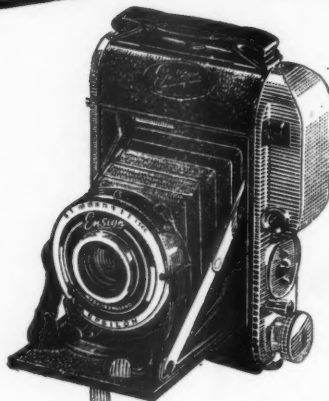
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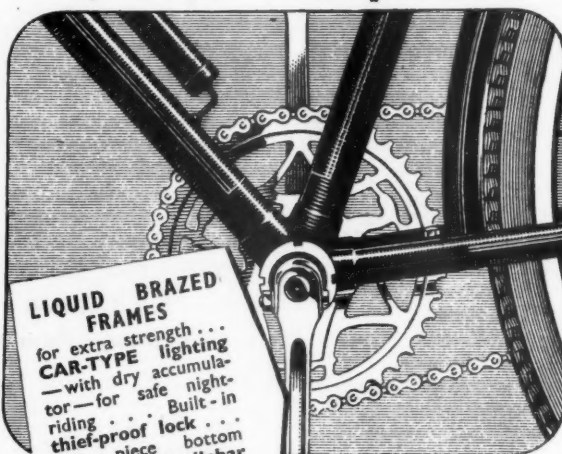
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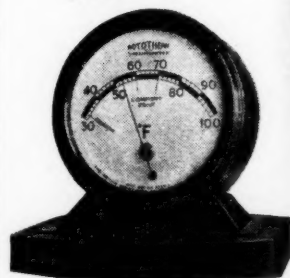
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IT WAS from the tall slender ale-glass that the requirements of the inn produced the sturdy goblet—varying from the enormous quart size down to the little "rummers". Shapely in proportion, their stems were yet stout enough for practical use. Some even had no stems at all, the base being rounded so that the glass would not stand and had to be emptied before setting down—thus giving us the word "tumbler", and showing once more how craftsmanship has been developed and fostered

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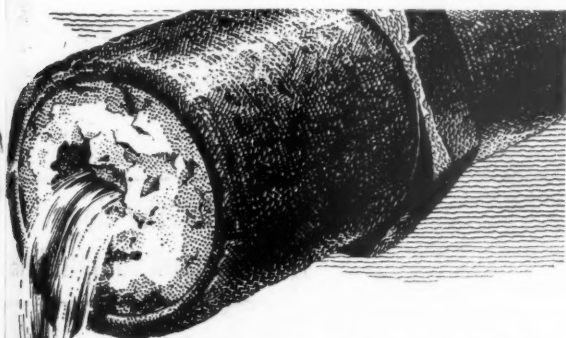
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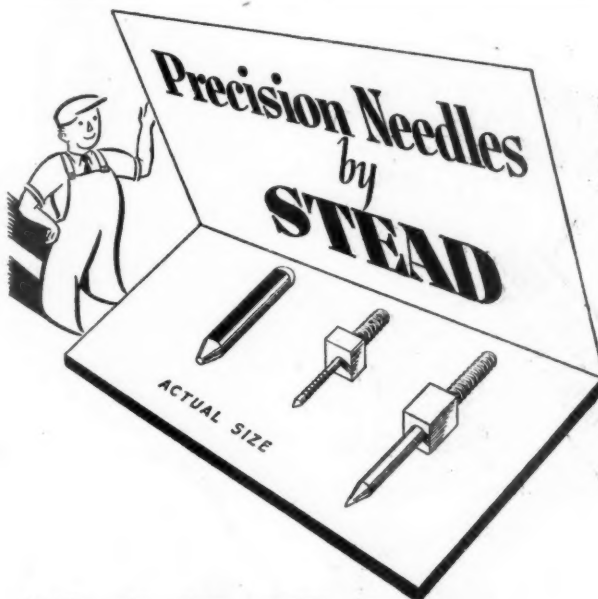
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Six Cigar (1/6d. each) to smoothen
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Not if it's the one on a King
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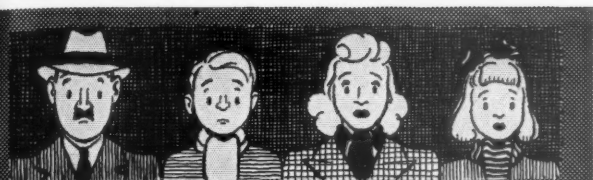
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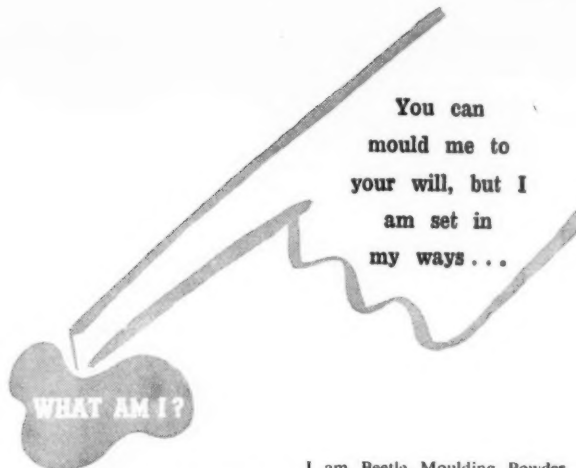


WITH

- "Standard" Fireworks will be scarce this year but all regular "Standard" dealers will have a quota.
- Prices are 25% above the prices marked on the goods; thus a nominal 1/- worth costs 1/3.

Standard
FIREWORKS

MADE IN HUDDERSFIELD AND SOLD IN THE BEST SHOPS EVERYWHERE



You can
mould me to
your will, but I
am set in
my ways...

I am Beetle Moulding Powder.

In a hot mould, under pressure, you can form me to the shape of the mould. By repeating the process you can reproduce thousands of identical articles in white or black and in the gayest or most subdued shades. I'm set in my ways because I'm a thermo-setting plastic. Once hardened by heat, I become a chemically reformed character, insoluble, infusible, unfading, unchangeable. Once set I cannot be upset.

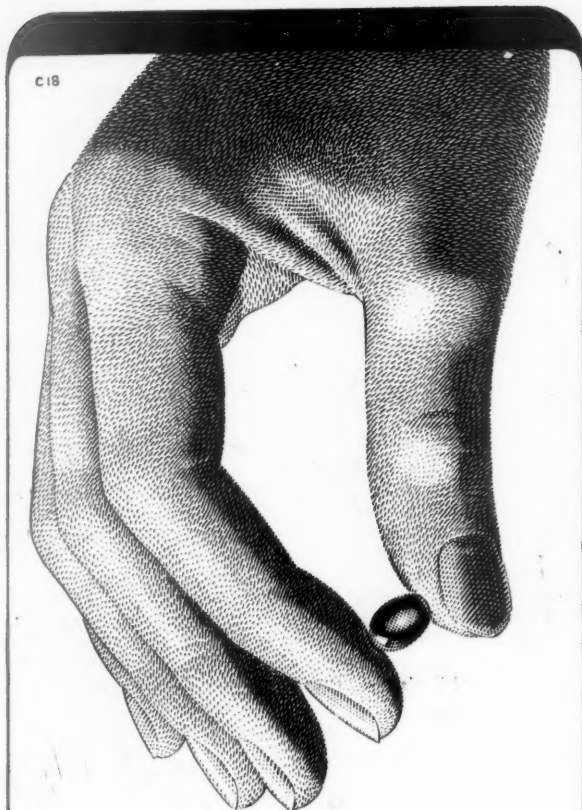
Although I am being produced in much larger quantities than before the War, the supply of raw materials for my manufacture has not yet caught up with the ever-growing demands made upon me. This means that as essential needs must be met first, the shortage of such desirable things as lampshades, picnic ware and bottle caps of Beetle, to name but a few, will continue for a time.

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL PLASTICS LTD



1 ARGVLL STREET · LONDON · W 1





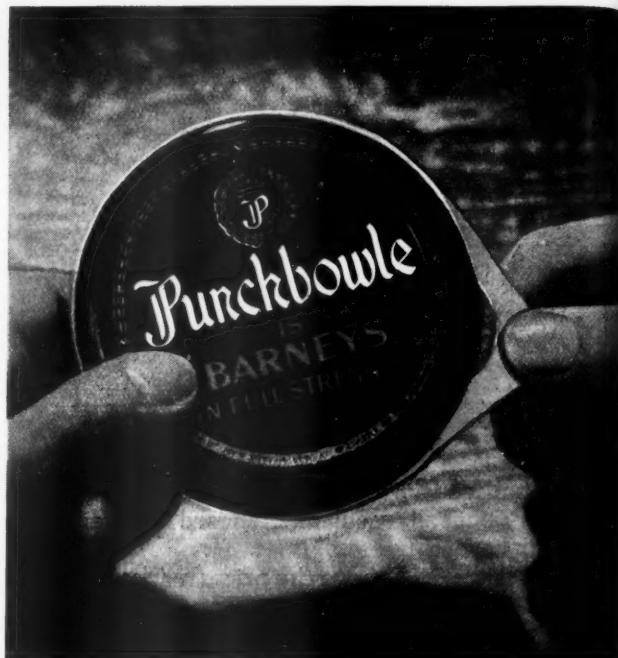
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"widest-travelled and most enduring of good Tobaccos"

This letter came from an officer serving with the VIII Greek Division. We are grateful to the sender for his friendly interest.

To John Sinclair Ltd.

April 8/47.

Dear Sirs,

During the course of my duties with the British Military Mission to Greece in Macedonia, I inspected a village near the Yugo-Slav border which had been razed to the ground by a guerilla band.

In a corner of one of the mud dwellings, amongst some goatskins, I espied two or three tins of your delicious Punchbowle. Being a votary of that famous brand, I seized upon it with delight and was gratified, later, to find it as fresh and cool as ever. I suppose I shall never know by what curious turn of fate it came to be there.

I have no objection to your using this letter for I felt I must write to tell you of yet another instance where Barneys has proved itself the widest-travelled and the most enduring of good tobaccos.

The Captain's original letter can be inspected at the Barneys Bureau, 24, Holborn, E.C. 1.



★ Barneys (medium), Parsons Pleasure (mild), Punchbowle (full). 4/1d. oz.

(296)

John Sinclair Ltd., Manufacturers, Newcastle-on-Tyne